According to the California Code of Regulations, Section 599.818, all State departments are required to have an annual training plan. A departmental training plan is essentially a work plan for the delivery of training services. Its purpose is to identify "organizational problems and goals that should be resolved or accomplished through training, appropriate training methods to assure program effectiveness and efficiency, and training target populations to be served by training programs. The training plan should also estimate training costs and establish criteria for evaluating training programs." By law, the Department of Personnel Administration is empowered to review training plans and provides these guidelines as a way of offering a broad range of additional ideas which may be useful in some circumstances.

Departments should develop strategic plans that identify the training requirements associated with strategic objectives and needed core competencies; assure adequate funding to meet the identified training needs; and assure that training investments are linked to specific strategic outcomes including return on investment analyses for workforce development programs and employee performance measures.

The training plan is developed by examining data from every level of the organization including, but not limited to 1) strategic objectives and identified business needs, 2) analysis of employee performance relative to required duties, 3) cross training and succession planning, and 4) identified opportunities for growth and development. At each level of the organization, objectives will help focus on desired outcomes and relevant activities. Analysis and comparison of *required* performance, knowledge, and skills with *actual* or *observed* performance, knowledge, and skills will result in the identification of gaps indicating possible training objectives. This is the essence of needs assessment. The plan should ensure that training needs assessments are built into training office operations, and that the identification of performance gaps becomes part of human resources and workforce development planning.

The training plan may be broad or specific in its scope. Whichever approach you choose, the department training plan may include answers to the following questions: who, what, when, where, why, how, and how much; as well as identify measurable performance outcomes.

Why
Identify the problems to be resolved or the goals to be accomplished through training. Generally, this takes the form of identifying one of the following:
- The business need being addressed through training (or)
- The relevant strategic objective from your strategic plan (or)
- The performance gap between "what is" and "what should be" (or)
- The law or other mandate requiring the training activity
- The category (i.e. job-required, job-related, etc.) for each objective

What
- The topic of training and desired performance outcomes, as appropriate.
- In general terms, identify the hardware, software, curriculum, materials, resources, and services required to develop and deliver the training.

Who
- Describe the target population. This may include: classification(s) for a better understanding of the level of duties which need to be performed and whether the diversity may require more than training activity or approach to meet the need; an estimate of the number of persons to be trained, which will help gauge the extent or resources needed to address the need.
- Identify training personnel, support staff, consultants, or suppliers who will develop, provide, and support training.

When
- The timeframe by which the training will be delivered. e.g. Is it one time training, periodic refresher, or a program addressing a continual flow of new employees, etc.? How often?

Where
- Consider identifying the location(s) of needed training activities. Given the selected strategy for delivery, how will resources be allocated to minimize costs such as travel, per diem, and overtime?

How
- Identify the training strategy appropriate to the topic, the audience and the desired outcomes (e.g., classroom training, On-the-Job Training, computer- or web-based training, self-study, supervised practice, or other methodology).

How Much
- Identify the cost for development and delivery of training services and the funding source(s). For a complete picture, consider including both direct and indirect costs, such as space, furniture, equipment, technology, materials, books, subscriptions, consultants, salaries and benefits for training developers, training supervisors, training time for participants, lost productivity for employee time spent in training, overtime costs for other staff to provide needed services while participants are in training, etc.

Performance Measures
- Identify the evaluation criteria to be used to measure whether identified needs were satisfied, goals were met, performance was improved, processes were improved, money was saved, etc. This generally requires establishing baseline data (evaluation of performance) prior to training for comparison with expected or desired performance measures after the training. (See "Guidelines for Training Evaluation Criteria").